



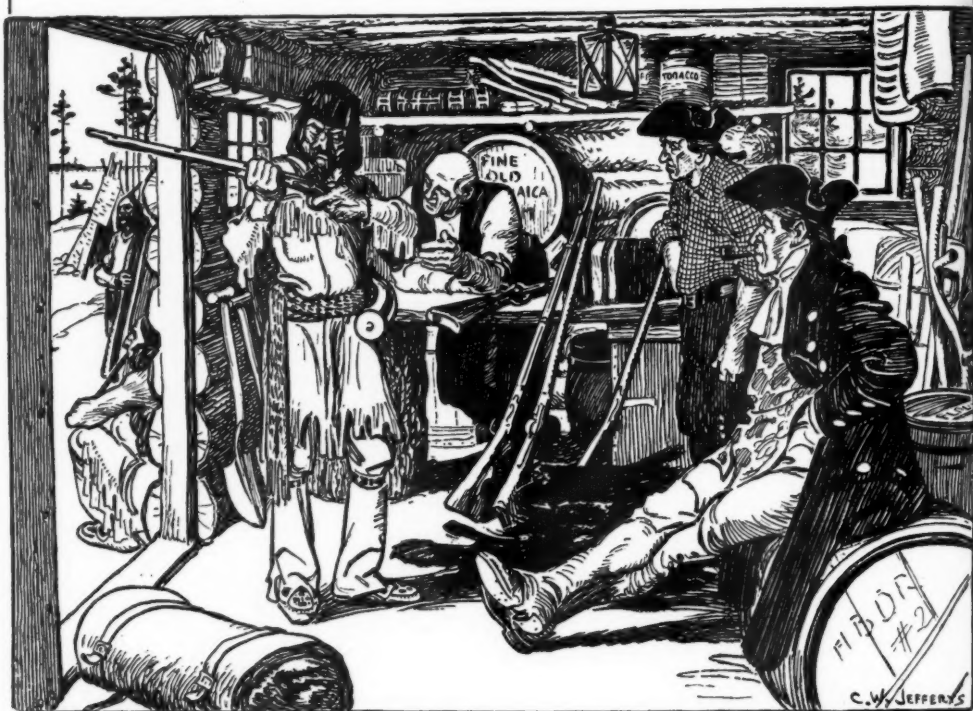
# CANADIAN ART

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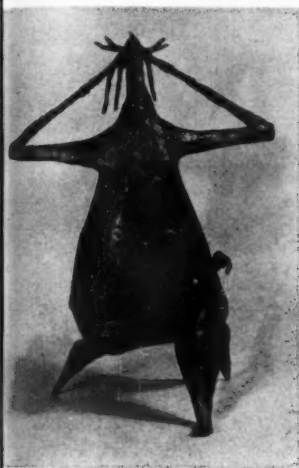
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# CANADIAN ART

Spring Number

CALIFORNIA  
MAY 8 1956

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THOMAS DAVIES. *Montreal 1812.* Water colour. The National Gallery of Canada



THOMAS DAVIES. *A View of Chateau Richy [Richer] Church near Quebec . . . 1788*  
Water colour. The National Gallery of Canada

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## Thomas Davies — Soldier and Painter of Eighteenth-century Canada

*During the past year the National Gallery of Canada acquired a group of 20 water colours of unusual historical and artistic interest. They were painted between 1757 and 1812 by Lieutenant-General Thomas Davies. The Public Archives of Canada have owned for some time a few drawings and a water colour by the same artist. Together they form a fascinating record of the Canadian scene and military events in Canada in the second half of the eighteenth century. Miss Kathleen Fenwick, the curator of prints and drawings at the National Gallery of Canada, describes the work of Davies in relation to the history of water-colour landscape painting. Colonel C. P. Stacey, the director of the historical section of the Canadian Army, has searched through army documents to uncover some hitherto little known facts about Davies.*

"ON THE 9th of April 1585 a little fleet of seven ships sailed from Plymouth into the Atlantic. They were fitted out by Sir Walter Raleigh, whose high hope was to found the first English colony in North America. Among the adventurers on board was John White, a man of middle age, experienced in travel. He carried with him a box of colours; for he combined with other functions that of draughtsman to the expedition. And in Virginia . . . John White made a number of drawings in water-colour." So Laurence Binyon, the English poet and writer on art, claims for English water colours, which are usually thought to have begun with the "stained" drawings of the eighteenth century, this "more gallant beginning in the days of Elizabeth".

John White's drawings are now in the British Museum. They interest us not only as possibly the earliest visual records made on this continent, but because among them are some of the first examples by an English artist of water-colour landscape painting, an art in which English artists were later to excel and make peculiarly their own. They have also an added interest for us here, for when, almost two hundred years later, in 1757, one Thomas Davies, a lieutenant in the Royal Regiment of Artillery, first set foot in North America, in what is now Canada, he also carried with him a box of water colours with which to record what he found here, to become in his turn one of the forerunners of the Canadian landscape school.

During the two hundred years or so which

elapsed between the coming of John White to Virginia and the arrival of Thomas Davies in Canada, many influences came to bear on the development of water colour painting in England. These influences and their sources would take more space to explore than this article will allow. But one continuity of tradition in this school may be briefly noted, a tradition of landscape based on topography, which concerns most closely Davies' water-colour views of Canada, of which a group of 20, rediscovered with other works by him in the library of the Earl of Derby a few years ago, have recently been acquired by the National Gallery of Canada.

Topography, or the art of portraying places, became fashionable in the eighteenth century with the demand among the nobility and the moderately wealthy for recognizable portraits of their houses and estates, of well-known places seen in their travels and of those places in the new world which were then being explored and developed and on which so much lively interest was centred.

The water-colour sketch or drawing could most happily fill this demand. Comparatively inexpensive and easily handled, it had the added advantage that if too many were acquired for display, the overflow could be stored in portfolios or in bound volumes in the library.

This topography was broad in its scope, ranging from the purely architectural, the straight landscape, river and seascape, the portrayal of life in town and village and of topical incidents, to the interest in portraying

the mood and beauty of a landscape for its own sake. In this broad sense the work of all artists prominent in eighteenth-century water-colour painting may be said to be topographical, that is, it is distinguished from the classical tradition of the idealized subject and composition by its truth to the scene or landscape portrayed.

This art of topography also had another more practical side in the use made of it for military purposes, for in the days before photography an essential part of the education of a British officer was a training in recording visually information likely to be of military and strategic importance, and at the Royal Military Academy at Woolwich this training, under an artist appointed for the purpose, was included in the regular course of studies.

Such then was the background of that branch of water-colour painting to which the series of views by Davies belong.

As yet we know little of Davies himself beyond the reference to him in Kane's army list and the facts which Colonel Stacey in the following article has established concerning his career while stationed in North America with his regiment. We know nothing of his youth although we may assume that he came from one of those English, or in view of his name possibly Welsh, families in comfortable circumstances whose sons traditionally made the army their profession. But at least it seems certain that at some time or other in his early years he must have become acquainted with the landscape painting of his day and that he received some adequate training in the art of water-colour painting, for in a view of Halifax of 1757, one of the earliest dated works by Davies that we know, we find him already an accomplished practitioner. This early water colour is no mere dry matter-of-fact reporting but the work of a young man stirred by the impact of new sights and scenes and with an already developed ability to portray what he saw with sensibility and feeling. But what artists influenced his work and formed his taste or by whom he was trained we can only guess. It is possible, however, that he received some instruction from an artist called Massiot who was drawing master at the Royal Military

Academy at Woolwich when Davies was, in all likelihood, in attendance there after he became a cadet in 1755. But this does little to enlighten us for we have no knowledge of Massiot or his work.

Davies' mastery in an art in which his English predecessors were comparatively few is therefore all the more interesting, although he was the contemporary of some of its greatest exponents such as Paul Sandby who, beginning as a military draughtsman, was drawing master at Woolwich from 1768 to 1796 and came to be regarded by many as the central figure in English water-colour painting of the eighteenth century.

There is every evidence in these views that Davies was not only an alert and intelligent observer but also a sensitive one. As a soldier he was concerned with fortifications, harbours and shipping, but as an artist he delights in the little towns and settlements, in the Indians in their strange colourful costumes, in the inhabitants imposing their pattern on the land, cultivating their crops, fishing in its abundant waters or taking the air of a summer evening, and he rejoices in the sunflowers under the tall pines, in the rich and varied vegetation, in the flaming splendour of the trees in autumn and in the wild rush of the great rivers and falls which attracted him so strongly. But what is most remarkable about these water colours is not the delightfully detailed information which he gives us with all the delicacy and minuteness of an illuminator of mediaeval manuscripts, but the feeling he shows for the character and atmosphere of the scenes portrayed and the richness and freshness of their colour.

Although there were exceptions, much of the topographical work of Davies' day consisted of quietly tinted drawings sometimes in monochrome or on a monochrome foundation. Such drawings were considered an easier proposition than more highly coloured ones for interpretation into line by the engraver for reproduction purposes, and there are examples of monochrome drawings by Davies and of engravings after his drawings in the Public Archives in Ottawa and in the Coverdale Collection in Montreal.

But, in these particular Canadian views, Davies paints directly on white paper with a



THOMAS DAVIES

*A View on the River La Puce  
near Quebec in Canada, 1782*

*Water colour*

*The National Gallery  
of Canada*

THOMAS DAVIES. *A View of Chateau Riche [Richer] . . . and . . . the Isle of Orleans . . . 1787. Water colour. The National Gallery of Canada .*







Three of the water colours by Thomas Davies in the collection of the National Gallery of Canada:

*A View of Hallifax [Halifax] . . . 1757*

*A View of Fort La Galet . . . and taking a French Ship of Warr . . . 1760*

*A View of Quebec taken near Beauport Ferry in 1787*

full range of colour which imparts to these scenes a brilliance, breadth and clarity that was not to be associated again with the Canadian landscape until more than a century and a half later with the advent of the Group of Seven. For accustomed as we are to think of Paul Kane and Cornelius Krieghoff as the forerunners of the Canadian landscape school, their work belongs essentially to the European tradition of their day in its sense of intimacy and lack of space. Whereas Davies, nearly a hundred years previously, looking with a young fresh unspoiled vision succeeds in conveying to us something of the sweep and breadth of this new land spread in the sun under vast bright skies, that sun which, as Kipling was later to observe, shone "lavish and unstinted". KATHLEEN M. FENWICK

### *Officer of Rank and Talent*

Who was Thomas Davies? Although he attained high rank in the British Army, comparatively little is known about him. His name is not to be found in the *Dictionary of National Biography*. The *Gentleman's Magazine*, though it noted the place and date of his death, did not trouble to give details of his career. Search at the Public Record Office in London has fortunately elicited some additional information. The object of the present article is to collect as many facts as possible about this obscure yet interesting officer who travelled so widely in North America and recorded what he saw so carefully and charmingly. There are many gaps in the story.\*

Thomas Davies (the name is often printed in contemporary records as Davis) was born in or about 1737; the *Gentleman's Magazine* recorded that he was "in his 75th year" when he died in March, 1812. His will tells us that his father was David Davies "of Shooters Hill" (presumably the place of that name near Woolwich, though the family names suggest Welsh origin). His military career may be said to have begun on March 1, 1755, when, his record at the Public Record Office indicates, he became a cadet. This doubtless signifies

\*If any reader can add anything to the record, it would be appreciated if he would communicate with the author of this article or with the National Gallery of Canada.



that he was then appointed to the Royal Military Academy at Woolwich, founded in 1741, where officers of the Royal Artillery and Royal Engineers were trained for two centuries. Drawing was an important part of the Woolwich curriculum from a very early date, and it was no doubt from G. Massiot, who was professor of landscape drawing from 1744 to 1768, when he was succeeded by Paul Sandby, that young Davies acquired the skill we still admire. We owe much of our knowledge of the appearance of early Canada to artillery and engineer officers who were trained at "The Shop" to observe precisely and to set down what they saw with paint and pencil.

On April 1, 1756, Davies was appointed "Lieutenant Fireworker" in the Royal Regiment of Artillery; this was then the lowest artillery commissioned rank. A year and a day later he was promoted second lieutenant. He first saw North America in the summer of 1757, when he arrived at Halifax with an artillery detachment embarked in the bomb vessel *Granado*, destined for an intended attack on Louisbourg. The earliest picture by Davies now in the National Gallery of Canada is *A View of Halifax in Nova Scotia taken from Cornwallis [McNab's] Island, with a Squadron going off [to] Louisburgh in the Year 1757*. This careful rendering of the town and defences shows us Halifax just eight years after its founding, and it represents the young officer's first reaction to the wonders of America.

The Seven Years' War was now in full swing. We can follow Davies' service in it by a combination of his own pictures with Colonel Laws' monumental *Battery Records of the Royal Artillery*. The Louisbourg project having been abandoned for the time being, Davies stayed on at Halifax. In 1758 he joined Captain Samuel Strachey's company of artillery and was with it that year in the siege and capture of Louisbourg; if Davies painted any pictures of this episode, no record of them has been found by the present writer. After the city fell, he went with a detachment commanded by Robert Monckton to lay waste the Acadian settlements in the St. John valley. The unfortunate inhabitants of Grymross (on

the site of Gagetown, N.B.), the "capital" of these settlements, had fled; but the village was burned, and Davies made a drawing of the scene. He spent the winter on detached duty at Fort Frederick on the site of the future city of Saint John, and has left a water colour of the fort and its surroundings. In 1759, the artillery muster rolls in the Public Record Office show, he was with Captain William Martin's company on Lake Champlain; the Archives have sketches of Crown Point by him bearing this date. In 1760 he was with Strachey's company, which accompanied Amherst's army in its advance down the St. Lawrence upon Montreal. A very interesting battle-piece by him shows "Fort La Galet" (La Galette, near the modern Ogdensburg) and the capture of the French ship *Ouatouaise* "by 4 Boats of 1 Gun each of the Royal Artillery Commanded by Capt Strachey". Kane's *List of Officers of the Royal Artillery*, quoted in Duncan's *History of the Royal Regiment of Artillery*, states that Davies at one time "commanded a naval force on Lake Champlain, and took a French frigate of eighteen guns after a close action of nearly three hours". It seems impossible to identify such an action on Lake Champlain, and it may well be that the story originated in the fight with the *Ouatouaise*. Knox's *Historical Journal of the Campaigns in North America* confirms that Davies himself did play a part in this engagement. It is interesting to note that all other contemporary accounts of the fight, including Amherst's own, say that there were five, not four British boats engaged; and they credit the command, not to Strachey, but to Colonel George Williamson, after whom indeed the captured vessel was re-named. Add to this the fact that Davies' caption to the picture describes him as captain-lieutenant, a rank he did not attain until 1762, and it becomes probable that he did not actually paint this picture until a considerable time after the events, although it was doubtless based on sketches or notes made on the spot.

The Public Archives of Canada possess another record by Davies of this campaign—a crude but vigorous drawing of Amherst's flotillas of boats running the rapids of the St.

Lawrence. This belonged to Sir Joshua Reynolds and bears his identification mark. Comparison with Reynolds' famous portrait of Amherst, which has a very similar scene in the background, suggests that the greater artist used Davies' picture as a source.

The muster rolls show that through 1762 Davies was commanding an artillery detachment at New York. There are a number of views of scenes in what is now the eastern United States bearing dates from 1764 to 1766, and it would appear that Davies was still stationed in America at this period. On January 1, 1771, he was promoted captain and appointed to command a new artillery company which was then formed at Woolwich. It remained in England until 1773, in which year (*Laws' Battery Records* tells us) it was sent overseas and Davies found himself once more at Halifax. The storm of the American Revolution was now blowing up. George III's government having decided to coerce Massachusetts, in the summer of 1774 the company was moved to Boston. It was doubtless in action at Bunker Hill in June, 1775. When the British evacuated Boston the following year Davies' company went back to Halifax, and it was part of Howe's army which descended on New York later in 1776. It remained in the New York area through 1777 and 1778, and several battle pictures by Davies (now in the United States) testify that he took part in the fighting there. About March, 1779, Davies exchanged companies with an officer stationed at Minorca; he probably never went thither, since later in the year he appears as captain of a new company then raised at Woolwich. The company was still in England when on December 1, 1782, Davies was promoted major and ceased to be a company commander.

There is record of a picture of Gibraltar by him dated 1782; perhaps it was at this time that he became artillery commander there, as reported by Kane. But about 1786 he was back in Canada, a lieutenant-colonel now, as commander of the four companies of artillery at Quebec. (There was a general relief of the artillery there in 1786, which probably indicates the time of his arrival.) There are incidental references to him in the *Quebec Gazette*

for 1787, 1788 and 1789; and on November 11, 1790, the paper reported, "Yesterday afternoon the Detachment of the Royal Regiment of Artillery under the command of Lieutenant Colonel DAVIES, embarked on board the Transports previous to their Departure for England." No record has been found of his ever returning to Canada after this third long American tour of duty. In the course of it his pencil and brush had been busy. Of the 20 pictures of his now in the National Gallery, a full dozen are landscapes painted in the neighbourhood of Quebec City and bearing dates from 1787 to 1790. Some of the dates are difficult to read, but can be interpreted as within this range.

After 1790 comparatively little information about Davies has been found. There are pictures by him of Jamaica, dated 1803, and of a scene in China (which might be quite imaginary) dated 1797. He became a colonel in 1794, a major-general in 1796, a colonel-commandant of the Royal Artillery in 1799 and finally a lieutenant-general in 1803. He seems to have remained on the active list of the Army until his death, which took place at Blackheath, near Woolwich, on March 16, 1812. There is evidence that he continued painting until the very end with undiminished skill, and that his thoughts in his last days were returning to his time in Canada; for one of the pictures now in Ottawa is a pleasant water colour (here reproduced) of Montreal as seen from the mountain. It is firmly signed and dated 1812.

Davies' will at Somerset House, London, shows that he had a son (George Thomas) and a daughter (Maria, who married Alexander Tulloh, an officer of the Royal Artillery). His wife Mary, whose maiden name has not been found, survived him and was paid an annuity by the Royal Artillery Marriage Society, to which he had belonged. This fact derives from the records of the Society, which still exists.

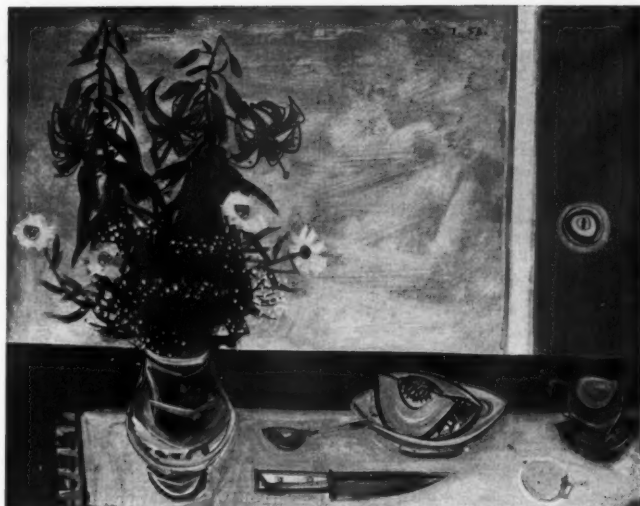
General Davies is one of the most important of the many soldier-artists who painted in Canada in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. His pictures are full of vitality and colour, and seem none the worse for the "primitive" touches which mark him as a

*Continued on page 300*

JACQUES DE TONNANCOUR

*Still Life with  
Tiger Lilies, (1953)*

*Collection: Mr. and Mrs.  
Gérard Beaulieu*



## Should It Be How to Paint or What to Paint?

JACQUES DE TONNANCOUR

*This article was originally intended as a comment by Jacques de Tonnancour on why he concentrated on painting landscapes last summer, after his work for many years had been so largely of a different character. He says he "tried to comply with the editors' demand but this is what came out." The reader should understand that the paintings reproduced here are not meant as direct illustrations, in any absolute or exact way, of the things said in this article. They, however, do reflect the art of Jacques de Tonnancour over this period in which his whole attitude towards painting has been subject to such a soul-searching.*

**W**ITHOUT wisdom, virtue can be practised as a vice. And wisdom is not a modern quality.

In 1950, after a search for purity of form, which I had pursued with unrelenting passion, I began to feel a dreadful strain and a premonition that I could paint no more. I also developed a hatred for painting of such intensity that I was at a loss to understand what was happening to me. Yet, I kept trying to paint for a while, against the odds, but neither technique nor aesthetics could provide me with the faintest hopes of getting out of that rut.

The real source of the conflict lay deeper.

I had made myself into a pure artist, an impeccable superstructure; now I was in search of a foundation. I was a function in search of an essence.

Delacroix's description of Ingres, "a complete expression of an incomplete man", touched me quite directly, although I could not then suspect how much.

In the back of my mind, a cruel and despairing question kept recurring: how could I paint now? It took me a while to notice this insidious question, for it was only a half-conscious one. Then suddenly its meaning struck me for what it was. When you are left to worry about the "how" of art, you are left only with the form of art. And out of this grows all academic art, irrespective of labels.

Now, I feel no shame in writing about this problem. Because, if personal here to me, I have also since discovered that it is an endemic and collective problem, one obsessing a whole civilization.



JACQUES  
DE TONNANCOUR

*Laurentian  
Landscape (1955)*

Collection:  
Mr. and Mrs.  
Gérard Beaulieu

JACQUES  
DE TONNANCOUR

*Trees in the  
Wood (1955)*

Collection:  
Gérard Beaulieu



COUR  
1955)  
et

Like everyone else, whether plumber, automobile-maker, or space-physicist, the artist tacitly deifies the modern concept of progress. He may openly deny this, but look at his work. The fear of not being modern is right there. And underlying it is the fear of being human.

Yet in art there is no progress along the lines of gadget-making. To be as modern as

appear as two facets of the same communication between creature and Creator. In the beginning, art and religion were one and inseparable. Spiritual experience, however, when it leans toward either intellectual or material temptations, is always debased. The debasement appears as excessive form at the expense of content.

Such priority given to form, both intellec-



JACQUES DE TONNANCOUR. *Laurentian Landscape* (1955)

*The National Gallery of Canada*

tomorrow in art is to be as dead as yesterday's newspaper. New forms are nothing as such.

Progress in art is always primarily concentric and inward, toward deeper content which, in turn, creates the need for better form. When these two components, content and form, fall out of rank or grow at different times without mutual effect, one upon the other, art becomes academic, at least to a degree.

Material civilization seeks out new and better ways of living; art aims, not at ways, but at the seizure of life itself, a God-given thing we cannot improve upon. Art and prayer then

tual and material, or to the "how" of it, is nothing very new. Greek, Roman and Renaissance art came down with that disease.

We today tend to take the question of "how" for granted; it looks sensible and natural enough. After all it does come into play whenever there is a creative act. Yes, but only *incidentally*.

Does one ask oneself "how" to love? Then why should an act of love, such as art, be different?

The startling thing is that no sooner have you asked yourself this question of "how" than your art is somehow vitiated, regardless





JACQUES DE TONNANCOUR. *Pierrot* (1954)  
Charcoal

of whether you paint women, semi-abstractions or the most absolute abstractions. You never escape it. Ask yourself how you walk and then try and do it naturally!

This dilemma between form and content has plagued the occidental artist ever since he began investing in solid rational securities. The Renaissance and post-Renaissance artist picked up the weakness from their studies of Greco-Roman antiquity. And Leonardo's *Treatise on Painting* blue-printed the pattern of thought on art for centuries. This book is the ancestor of all "how to do it" books. Its influence on us, direct or indirect, is enormous. And it is amazing, as Malraux says, how this man, who was the least meant to influence art, actually left such an imprint on it.

In his time, technical preoccupations were all important. In our own days, we have swung more to the intellectual and the ideological, from the "how to do it" to the "how to think it".

But this move from the physical sciences to the metaphysical has not released art and never

will. So, neolithic man still remains the *avant-garde* artist, not this poor fool of today who wonders how to treat nothingness differently. Who cares for differences between geometric or biomorphic formalism when art should simply be *biogenic*, first and last?

Today, quite against one's most remotely intimate wishes, one may easily be drawn to the side of rationalism or formalism (which can dress itself up in a great many ways) and so develop a tragically split personality. When rationalism rules in a totalitarian way over the unconscious, one just gasps for fresh air, as the impressionists did after art had become dominated too long by excessive consciousness.

Before I could paint again, I had to take a leave of absence of nearly five years. (Teaching during those years was a most painful experience!) I did return to my studio occasionally, to produce a few isolated works that showed a more lyrical quality, but none followed into another, they were all sporadic outbursts.

The crisis had to resolve itself in biological time, through the slow metamorphosis of *how to paint* into *what to paint*. By that I don't mean a shift from the intellectual to the visual. By *what to paint* I mean rather man with his environment and the residue of his experiences in life, all of which are deeply imbedded in his psychic reality.

A return to nature? Yes, if you will allow me to explain this term more fully later.

Before this discovery I had become frozen into a static attitude before nature. Of course, all life became meaningless from there on.

So I stayed out of my studio for a number of years and lived in my garden whenever I could, at the level of instinct. I must add that my garden includes my wife, my four children and some extraordinarily patient and kind friends, besides the vegetable ones.

It was in a garden that Adam lost insight for the dubious advantages of outlook. In mine, things worked out in reverse. Identification with nature teaches one that one is not self-made, and that possession by putting one's grip on things is nothing compared to losing oneself in them.

Collectively, art has no significance to modern man, it remains a riddle to him. It is



a private affair between the few, who accept that life remain a mystery. Schools of art, lectures, art education and the rest only help patch up a shattered thing. But, sad as it is, the divorce between art and the public is here to stay. Art and religion are vertical appetites in man; modern civilization, however, runs horizontally.

No one has clarified this better than Jung in *Modern Man in Search of a Soul*:—"When the spiritual catastrophe of the Reformation put an end to the Gothic age with its impetuous yearning for the heights, its geographical confinement and its restricted view of the world, the vertical outlook of the European mind was forthwith intersected by the horizontal outlook of modern times. Consciousness ceased to grow upward, and grew instead in breadth of view, as well as in knowledge of the terrestrial globe. This was the period of the great voyages, and of the widening of man's ideas of the world by empirical discoveries. Belief in the substantiality of the spirit yielded more and more to the obstrusive conviction

that material things alone have substance, till at last, after nearly four hundred years, the leading European thinkers and investigators came to regard the mind as wholly dependent on matter and material causation."

I personally feel that beyond this horizontalization of man's outlook, attributed to the Reformation by Jung, one can go back as far as Greek idealism for its cause.

Modern art, all along, has tried to escape from this attitude by varied and multiple attempts to rejoin the primitive arts, which were collective and religious and bursting with a "mystic participation" in life. But since our civilization is far more dependent on Greco-Roman and Renaissance concepts than Christian, we have tried doing it, not out of love and faith, but through disciplines and ideologies, which is most paradoxical and ephemeral. Whence, our constant need for a change. As a collective manifestation, modern art expresses more a neurotic craving for a life based on mystic participation, than it does this life itself.



JACQUES DE TONNANCOUR

*Girl Seated (1953)*

*The National Gallery  
of Canada*

The artist, who, more than others in his society has a nostalgia for a more natural world invested with psychic projections, cannot live with the objectivated world of today. Out of frustration, he cuts himself away from it and paints a non-objective world. But he is still a horizontal man, typical of his civilization which is full of conflicts. Reacting diametrically to "intent on things", to borrow the phrase Maritain uses to describe Greek art, he becomes intent on nothing.

I wish now to speak more specifically of form and content.

The artist handles *quantities* (so much of this with so much of that) which act as a medium through which the undefinable and, by vocation, infinite *qualities* or content of the inner man can be expressed in material form.

Nothing can be more antagonistic to the purity of art than trying to achieve it by mutilation, amputation, castration or lobotomy. Purity chooses neither the beast nor intelligence. Suicide awaits us at both ends. Horizontally, we have no choice. Only vertically.

If the subject matter of art were seen more as a source of stimulation, as one vitally important to the general processes of creation, then fewer artists would practise, as they do today, a pathetic and morbid inbreeding of the self in the hope of a renewal.

The artist by himself can renew nothing. And that explains why pure artists can only repeat themselves over and over again and ask themselves "how they could paint now . . ."

The purity of art, assessed in the terms of how little there is left in it, obviously makes no sense. I would rather understand it as the unification of the greatest number of things sublimated to the greatest heights.

This said, let any form live if it has life. And if I have condemned some attitudes and tendencies, including my own, let it not be inferred from this that I automatically reject them in all their particulars. Even he who works within academic tendencies may come out with something of fine quality, even if his chances of doing so seem unfavourable.

Should redemption not be for all, I would be the first to cry for it.

## Chuck Yip: A Chinese-Canadian Artist

THE works of Chuck Yip, a young artist of Vancouver who has recently had his first one-man exhibition in that city, demonstrate the subtle influences of time and place on the hand and heart of a sensitive and skilful craftsman.

Yip, who is in his early thirties, has an unusual background which is clearly reflected in his painting. His grandfather was a noted Chinese pioneer in British Columbia; and Yip

himself, although steeped in the traditions and skills of China, is manifestly very much at home in his native province.

The stimulus of landscape and climate, as evident in the works of many British Columbia artists, are here expressed by a hand which automatically gives every line the dignity and loveliness of oriental calligraphy. Also the simplest plant form is treated by him with deep respect for the poetry contained in it.



CHUCK YIP. *Drawing for an invitation to an exhibition*

At the same time, Yip is an individualistic young man with strong ideas who lives and enjoys a contemporary way of life in the environment of a highly modern city.

Yip, who now teaches fabric design at the Vancouver School of Art, himself received his formal training there. He has successfully designed fabrics for mass as well as hand production. But he is happiest, however, when his imagination and hand are uninhibited by the limitations imposed by mass reproduction. He considers himself primarily to be a painter. So far, most of his work has been small, with details verging on the microscopic. However, when he begins to stand away from his working surface and uses, with quick movements, a pen or long-handled brush, he is at his best.

Among Yip's hobbies is horticulture; and when he loses himself in fanciful abstractions of plant growth, the results are as organic and sprightly as a series of stop-motion photographs of a living plant.

The theme of freedom, highly disciplined by careful training, is strong in his art. "When I sketch a portrait of a woman whose nose seems long to me, I must draw it long, for that is the way I feel about it", he says vehemently.

His lack of fear in combining media with unflinching audacity reflects the same admirable quality. For example, his work ranges from uncluttered pencil sketches to the most intricate combinations of oil, crayon, poster paint and ink.

A frequent use of nebulous background textures does not imply melancholy. His colours are darkish but not sombre; they suggest rather a happy concern with the mysterious and bring to mind a child's fascination with the darker corners of the garden. Many of his titles reflect this: *Enchantment*, *Enchanting Forest*, *Mystify*, *Enigma*, *Paradise Entrance*, *Intricacy*, *The Search*.

Of these, *Enchantment* reflects his interest in line. The struggling plant growth motif, with the typical moody background, is expressed with oil on paper, with the oil used as a delicate tint. The intricacies of the structure of the plant itself are sharply defined in black ink.

Of his recent works, *Nautical*, a longitudinal painting done in poster paint on scratch-



CHUCK YIP. *Enchantment*. Mixed media

board, is made up of stylized boat and sail forms, contrasted in shape and colour. These are primary colours which, on closer examination, have overlaid patterns on the smallest scale, like tiny, jewelled webs. Each figure seems part of a symbolic language. The Chinese approach to the written word is obvious here.

Chuck Yip is young, he is still experimenting, still developing the potentialities of his own special background and personality. As for his work, he believes it must grow organically, without conscious striving for a style, or as he explains: "Each painting has its seed in the one that went before it."

MARY ANN LASH

# At the Foot of the Ladder

JEAN-RENÉ OSTIGUY

VISITING the exhibition "Design in Scandinavia", when it came to Ottawa last year, I overheard a visitor remark: "Objects as well designed as these should be used with respect". I do not hesitate to present this thought as a subject for meditation to students newly graduated from an art appreciation course. It will, I hope, offer them a good occasion to summarize their understanding of art, all the way from a simple ash-tray to the Venus of Milo. But how many of them will recognize the implications of this subject?

Indeed, too few of us are aware of the part played by the useful arts. For a great number of people the criteria of culture lies in a person's ability to remember the names of a few impressionist painters. Fortunately, culture is a far more serious matter. So one should welcome every new occasion to reconsider art, especially in reference to objects of everyday use.

The latest publication of the National Industrial Design Council, a portfolio entitled *Design for Canadian Living*\*, which is available to all high schools of the country, in both French and English editions, provides an excellent opportunity for this to be done. This portfolio, however, is in no sense a text-book for art appreciation courses. It is rather a teaching aid in industrial design.

It begins with a brief outline of the useful arts through the ages. There follows a study of how the industrial designer works and an outline of the conditions which a manufactured article must meet in order to be of merit in design. Finally there is a reference to city planning and the design of street equipment.

Two of these 12 illustrated double sheets in the portfolio test the judgment of students by asking them to choose between objects, reproduced in photographs, such as radios, lamps, kettles. The teacher should, at this moment, note what the opinions of each pupil

are, and so lead them by discussion to a sounder basis of taste. Students will show great interest in this quiz. Answering it, they will discover, perhaps for the first time in their lives, that they have always had opinions in the field of art. They can no longer claim indifference. So it will become clear to them that art is already a part of their lives, something they cannot take or leave according to their fancy.

Since my purpose is not to review in detail *Design for Canadian Living*, I shall deal at once with a question which many readers may very well ask: Why should not the first spokesmen of beauty be the fine arts themselves?

The fine arts are perhaps first in significance because of their absolute freedom. However, they are not so immediately related to our daily life as are the useful arts. A thousand times a day objects of everyday use confront us; they present us with a world of rightness or of wrongness; they cry out for our approval or disapproval. Those who have first learned to respect beauty by their appreciation of everyday objects will later find in the fine arts a glorious fulfilment. The quality of our contemplation, however, must be consistent. A reproduction of Renoir's *La Loge* on a wall lighted by a lamp in the form of a panther proves the falsehood of our understanding.

Students today have taken up the vogue for books of reproductions of paintings. But this infatuation for "art treasures of the world" will pass rapidly if it is not set within a broader approach to the arts. Of course, it is possible to begin one's discovery of art by first finding out how to look at paintings. But this method for students has its dangers, for by following this path one may never come to relate art to one's daily life. Furthermore, students who have been exposed only to this artificial kind of art appreciation may, as they grow older, lose their interest in the fine arts, in the same way they earlier lost their childish enthusiasm for stamp collecting, and so revert to a purely business-like approach

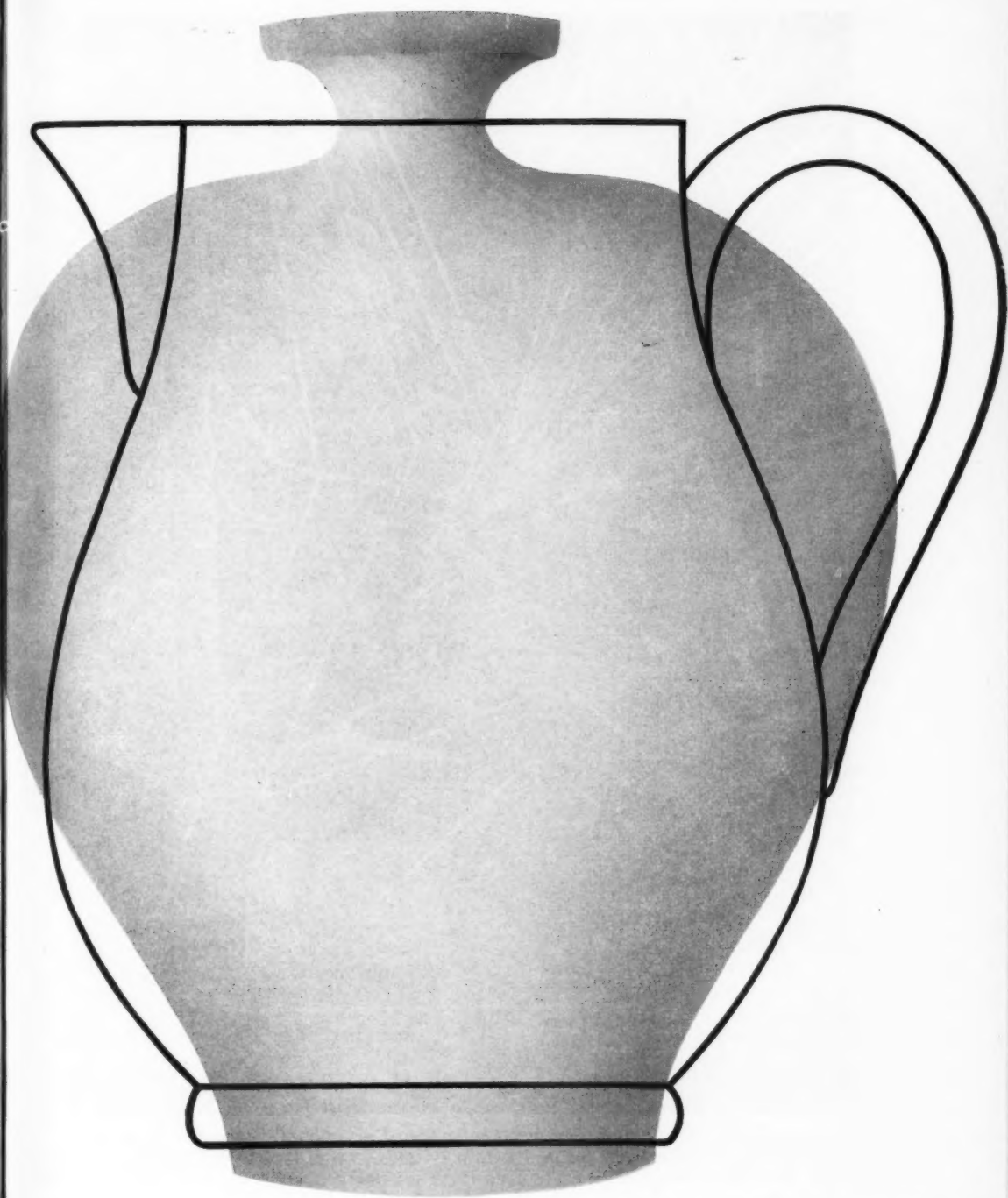
\*An illustration from this portfolio is shown on the opposite page. This publication is available from the National Industrial Design Council, Ottawa, for \$1.00 post free.

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*A Sung vase (China) and over it the outline of  
a contemporary Wedgwood jug (England).*





BERTRAM BROOKER. "And he lay and slept under a juniper tree, behold then, an angel touched him, and said unto him, arise and eat." Illustration for *Elijah*. Pen and ink drawing

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to life in which the arts play no part.

To avoid this, students should be introduced to art at the foot of the ladder, that is by the beauty to be found in everyday objects. What constitutes this beauty is explained in the portfolio *Design for Canadian Living*; its intelligent use will enable students to make sounder judgments in the little choices life imposes upon them every day, and so prepare them both to understand and respond to that

artistic order and rightness which is the goal of every ideal community.

In the range of human activities, art is most normal and necessary. To recognize this is to understand the place of the artist in society. It is romantic to think of him as a genius in his ivory tower. What we must do rather is to recognize him as a creator of forms which will satisfy, both on the level of the fine and of the useful arts, the needs of our time.

## Bertram Brooker 1888-1955

THOMAS R. LEE

AS THE late Augustus Bridle wrote, Bertram Brooker was "a man of all the arts".

There was, of course, Brooker the novelist, whose first published work of fiction, *Think of the Earth*, won the first Governor General's Award, Brooker the historian and critic of the arts in Canada, also Brooker the advertising executive and copy-writer and author of technical books on that subject. Then there was Brooker the singer, the actor and the dramatist. But, it is Brooker the painter and draughtsman, Brooker the first Canadian abstractionist, who is honoured in the memorial exhibition given this year by the Ontario Society of Artists; this is the Brooker who drew upon music, religion, the natural world and the spiritual world, for his depictions by brush, pencil and pen, the man who in a busy life once spent four solid days in a vacant lot studying and picturing the beauty and nobility of the humble weed.

Bertram R. Brooker, known to his friends as Bert, was born in 1888, in Croydon, England. At the age of 10, he was singing in a church choir and was also earning his first wages, by shining shoes and bringing up coal after school. Most of this money was turned over to his mother to help the family and when he was 12 Bert quit school and became a messenger for a dairy. He stayed there until he was 17, rising to the post of book-keeper. Then his family moved to Canada.

The Brookers arrived at Portage la Prairie in May, 1905; they chose this city simply because a friend had mentioned its name in a

letter. From being a train despatcher in England, Bert's father in Canada became a railway labourer. Bert himself was employed in the building of the Grand Trunk Pacific, but he studied typing and shorthand at night and he was transferred to the clerical staff of the railway. On Sunday he sang in the choir of St. Mary's Anglican church, and it was in the choir that he met Aurilla Porter, whom he married in 1913.

In the same year, persuaded that motion pictures were the coming thing, he and his brother bought a movie theatre in Neepawa. Bert was soon writing scenarios for the movies and selling them to Vitagraph for Maurice Costello. In 1914, he handed the theatre over to his brother and he became editor of the *Portage Review*. He then worked on the *Winnipeg Telegram* and later on *The Free Press*. He began his career in advertising in Regina. By 1921 he was with the journal, *Marketing*, in Toronto, and from 1924 to 1926 he was its editor and publisher.

Soon after his arrival in Toronto, Brooker became a member of the Arts and Letters Club. At that time the Group of Seven was all the "rage" (the term is used in its strongest sense). Brooker greatly admired its work, more particularly its "great influence in liberating younger artists from the stuffy tradition of strict realism".

He began to see in painting another medium through which to express his views, thoughts, hopes and impressions. Up to this time his only painting had been water colours, in slapdash

brush strokes, for his children, which bore such engaging titles as *The Noise of a Fish*. Now, without a lesson, with no knowledge of pigments, he plunged into painting. His artist friends, particularly Bess Housser (now Mrs. Lawren Harris) gave him materials and advice. The result were the first Canadian abstractions.

While he admired the Group, Brooker couldn't draw a tree, a figure, or even a leaf, so he decided there was no sense in trying to emulate the Group's work. He had told Harris one day that if ever he started painting he would strive to picture his experiences in music. And that's what he did. With ruler and compass he sought to compose on canvas the colour, the volume and rhythm he experienced while listening to music.

"There were shapes in some of these early pictures," said Brooker, "but they were not objects in the ordinary sense—they were not nouns—you couldn't name them. Most of the

*The late Bertram Brooker, a memorial exhibition of whose work was recently presented at the Art Gallery of Toronto by the Ontario Society of Artists of which he was a member*



shapes were floating areas of colour—they were verbs, representing action and movement . . . Perhaps the clearest clue to what I have been aiming at is to say that whereas most artists paint nouns or objects, I have attempted to paint verbs—or movements—activity." When the shapes came close to recognizable objects, such as spheres, rods or peaks, they were, he said, "only intended as the path or climax or culmination of a movement, not its finish."

When members of the Arts and Letters Club saw Brooker's abstractions, and they were the first to see them, there was great commotion. A. Y. Jackson made the comment, "These make the Group seem like old hat—it would be too bad if the public caught up with the artist." Arthur Lismer is credited with introducing Brooker's work to the club, and in dramatic fashion. It was hung, unnamed and unsigned, behind curtains. After dinner, the curtains were pulled and members were asked to identify the work and the painter. Only one man could. "Oh, I know who did that," exclaimed G. D. Atkinson, "Brooker! Look, it's all music!"

"Music inspired more than three-quarters of his work," agreed Mrs. Brooker. "I called him the frustrated musician. Because he had no outlet in that, his striving burst out in all other directions, writing, painting, advertising and philosophy. He was always searching for something higher than he knew, but hoped to find. Much of his work came fresh and quick from the inspiration of a concert heard perhaps only that evening."

One year after he began to paint, Brooker was invited to show in the 1927 exhibition of the Ontario Society of Artists. His pictures were *Arise, Shine* and *Endless Dawn*. He fully anticipated the public reaction, the cries of anguish, which greeted this first Canadian venture into the abstract.

"This work," Brooker conceded, "may be puzzling to many because they probably will not be able to relate it to better known and more publicized paintings by European and American artists who represent the abstract and non-objective schools. Not one of these pictures is non-objective. In every one you will find some trace at least of a natural object. Therefore, I call them abstractions

because in most of them something has been abstracted from Nature. I hope some of you will feel that something new has been added, and that the aim of such additions is to express the experience of the artist in observing or meditating upon certain natural forms."

It was not long before the fascination of painting made Brooker eager to do drawings as well; he spent a long and lonely and self-taught apprenticeship here, drawing trees at first, then figures and still life. A drawing by LeMoine FitzGerald, "a very fast drawing of a bulbous, twisted tree", which he purchased, greatly influenced him. "Looking at it often," he said, "I came to think that the tree might just as well be a carrot or an elephant—in other words it was not so much an object as an attempt to search out the organization of any living thing. It was not really a thing, it was a verb, a picture of living."

Brooker was criticized for using little colour, but he was not interested in colour, that is pigment, he was "searching for the means of conveying the recession of objects in space, the movement of curves swinging around out of reach of the eye, and of the spatial relations between the objects in the composition." His studying, searching, and experimenting took in tree stumps, logs, rocks, driftwood, flowers and weeds. Braque was the master he admired, and as Braque treated his rum bottles, guitars, grapes, fish, chairs and stoves, so Brooker portrayed the weed. "Nobility can be added to a weed, which some see as a dusty, be-draggled thing," said Brooker of an exhibition of his weed studies. "It can be done if you sit down and regard it with wonder as a child sees his first elephant at the circus or his first airplane in the sky . . ."

Brooker had sold the magazine, *Marketing*, in 1926 in order to do free-lance work and to devote every possible spare moment to his various creative activities. Three days a week at *The Globe* left him three days for other writing. He would calculate how much money was required to cover household expenses for the particular day and do an article to cover it. This left him with his conscience free to spend the rest of the time on creative work. To eat, he wrote articles for various papers and magazines, including a column, "The Seven Arts",



BERTRAM BROOKER. *Entombment*

syndicated to a number of daily newspapers. For pleasure, he wrote fiction.

In 1929, the annual exhibition of the Ontario Society of Artists included a special showing of 40 of Brooker's pen-and-ink drawings. These included 12 of his *Elijah* series, published the next year in a volume which is now a rare piece of Canadiana. The "*Elijah*" oratorio, in which Brooker had sung so frequently, had inspired these. Others were of the *Isaiah* series and the *Genesis* series.

Dr. and Mrs. Harold Tovell of Toronto were the first private collectors to take note of Brooker's work and they became enthusiastic supporters. They purchased, for example, his pen-and-ink drawings in the first *Yearbook of the Arts in Canada*, which came out in 1929. This was a collection of essays on the six major arts, literature, drama, painting, sculpture, architecture and music, written by artists who were creatively engaged in the fields of activity they described, with an "original" section reproducing work which suggested a development or trend peculiar, native or original to this country. Brooker compiled it, edited it, wrote a preface and introduction, designed the end-papers and also wrote an essay on sculpture for it.

The *Yearbook* was originally intended to be an annual, but the stock-market crash of 1929



BERTRAM BROOKER

*Violins*

and the ensuing depression ended that hope. Brooker brought out a second *Yearbook* in 1936 but there have been none since, although it was his dream that, if it could not appear annually, it could periodically.

His typewriter never seemed to be still but in 1929, with a wife and three children, he decided his income should be a little surer and steadier than that of a free-lance, so he joined the J. J. Gibbons advertising agency, where he became account executive and copy and art director. He was working then on his first novel, *Think of the Earth*, which when published in 1936 won the Governor General's medal, awarded the first time that year for fiction.

Always the experimenter, Brooker also decided to see if he could write a mystery story. The result was *The Tangled Miracle*, also published in 1936 but under the name of Huxley Herne. In that year, three different publishers, Jonathan Cape in England, Macmillan and Nelson in Canada, were bringing

out works by him. But there was plenty of reading, thinking and writing which never did appear in print. Philosophy was another of Brooker's interests, then mystical writings. The latter led to his discovery of William Blake on whom he accumulated everything he could.

In 1937 he joined the MacLaren Advertising Company with which he stayed until his death, at which time he was its vice-president. In 1951 he won the Silver Medal of the Association of Canadian Advertisers for the excellence of his work in this field.

In 1944 Brooker started *The Robber, a Tale of the Time of the Herods*. Before setting a word on paper, he had devoted years to a study of the Holy Land, its customs, language and other conditions as it was at the time of the Crucifixion. The book was published in 1949 in Toronto and New York, and later dramatized and used on two successive Good Friday broadcasts by the Ford Motor Hour.

Brooker completed three illustrations in an

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*Ancient Mariner* series and 10 for Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment*. His plan was that they should eventually be published in book form, the same as the *Elijah* series. Many have considered these illustrations to be his best work.

In his introductory essay, "Art and Society", in the 1936 *Yearbook*, he set forth his views as to the place and purpose of the true artist.

"The artist does not aim to please . . . He does not stand apart from life, jotting down what he *thinks* about it. He plunges into life, endeavouring to lose himself as a human being, so that he can *become* whatever he sees. He tries to experience the kind of life in front of him—whether a flower or perhaps an old shoe. He tries to feel what it is like to be a flower, or how it would feel to be an old shoe . . . His first impulse is not to *produce* anything—it is to *experience* something. And when he has experienced it, he sometimes expresses—or tries to express—what he has felt.

" . . . The artist is continually contributing

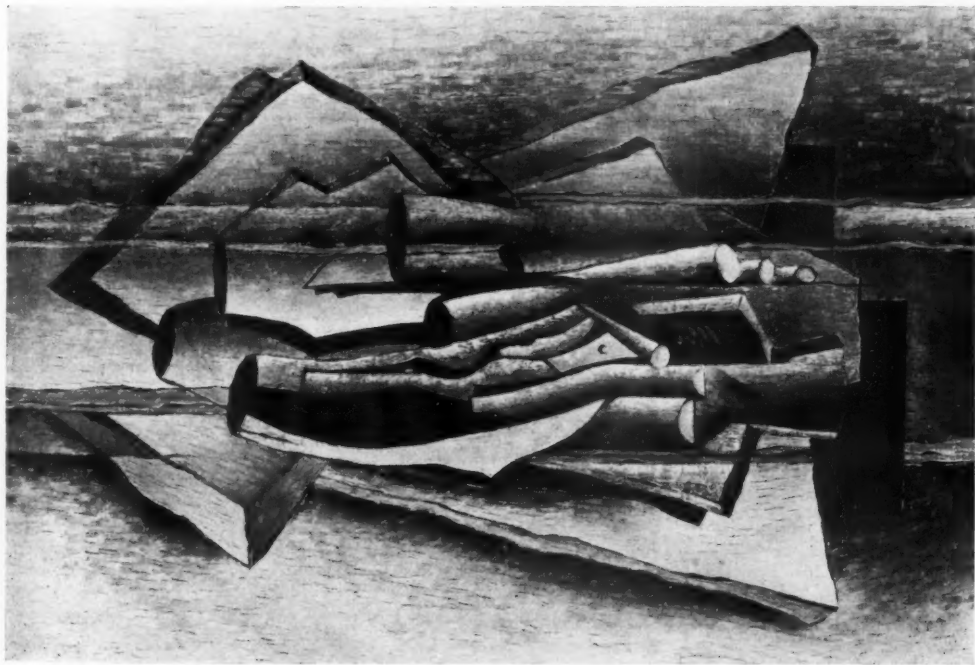
something new to the sum of the world's experience . . . Sometimes what he tells is so new—so shocking, perhaps—that his own generation derides him . . .

"That is the artist's function and fate—to give the world *novelty* too soon for society to appreciate it—and to be acclaimed too late."

Brooker felt that the artist, as artist, should be removed from the field of the practical and the useful, "and he should not be identified with what anybody ever called 'good'". The universe was not *good*; perfect, but not *good*, "and ever changing—creating a new harmony, a new perfection, at every moment."

"This 'creative newness', which is the nature of God, is what the artist senses," Brooker wrote. "Like God, he has no character. He is not on the side of any one thing against any other. He believes, as Blake said, 'every living thing is holy'. The 'beauty of holiness' is the concern of religion; and—to sum up everything we have said—art is not less rightly concerned with the holiness of beauty."

BERTRAM BROOKER. *Progression*. The Art Gallery of Toronto







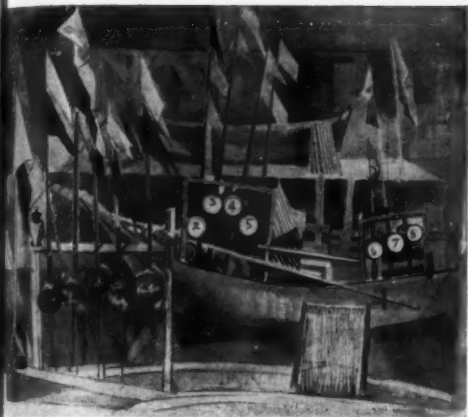
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*City Pastoral*  
*The Allied  
Arts Centre,  
Calgary*

## Recent Acquisitions by Canadian Museums and Galleries



H. G. GLYDE  
*Miners' Cottages,  
Canmore*  
*The Edmonton  
Museum of Arts*





PETER HAWORTH. *The Saucy Jane*. Water colour

***The Art Gallery  
and Museum,  
London***



JACK NICHOLS. *The Orange Cloak*. Pastel

TOM THOMSON. *Strong Northland*. Sketch



*Bronze crucifix  
Rhenish  
11th Century*



***The Royal Ontario Museum  
of Archaeology***



*Bronze ceremonial wine-pot  
Chinese, Shang Period  
(16th to 11th century B.C.)*



JOSEPH LEGARÉ

*Landscape with  
an imaginary  
monument to Wolfe  
Circa 1840*

***The Provincial Museum  
of Quebec***



*Silver incense burner  
by Salomon Marion  
Circa 1818*

ANTOINE PLAMONDON

*Portrait of Pierre Pelletier. Circa 1840*





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### CONTRIBUTORS

**Thomas R. Lee**, who lives in Baie d'Urfée near Montreal, is an enthusiastic collector of all Canadians concerned with the arts.

**Mary Ann Lash** is co-editor of the *News Calendar* of the Vancouver Community Arts Council.

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**Edwin Baker**, who did the cover for this issue, is a graduate of McGill University. After working for several years as an exhibition designer in England, he has now returned to Canada.



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## Bringing Art to the People



*York Wilson gives a painting demonstration for the Leaside extension group of the Art Gallery of Toronto*

*Art galleries are much more than mere repositories of works of art. Through exhibitions sent to outlying centres their collections now go out to meet the public. Other extension services such as lectures, films on art, demonstrations and study classes are available for both young and old. From the time, over a quarter century ago, when the National Gallery of Canada first organized a system of trans-continental travelling exhibitions to the present, when community art centres are being developed in the provinces, Canada has done much pioneer work in this field. The latest in rural and urban extension services are here described by Miss Norah McCullough, secretary of the Saskatchewan Arts Board, Regina, and by Mrs. Stewart Bagnani, in charge of the extension services of the Art Gallery of Toronto.*

### **The Problem of the Large City**

Six years ago, a survey conducted by the public relations committee of the Art Gallery of Toronto revealed that, in spite of the gallery's popularity, only a very small proportion of the population of Toronto ever came to enjoy its exhibitions and an even smaller proportion took any specific interest in its activities. Yet the staff knew that many more citizens were interested in art, even if only vaguely. The enormous area now covered by Metropolitan Toronto made it difficult for those who lived on the outskirts of the city to take advantage of our existing programmes. So we decided we must go out to them. By introducing to people in their own districts some of our facilities and possibilities, we hoped to widen public interest in the

gallery and to make some new friends, while in no way forcing anyone to accept us unless they wanted our services. We had no desire bluntly to wave the flag of education.

An extension department was formed with a member of the staff in charge. A small sub-committee drawn from our women's committee of the gallery assisted her. Teams, each consisting of two committee members, were assigned to various districts. Since the gallery had no funds with which to pay for the extension programme, each group had to finance itself in whatever way it saw fit. Some chose membership fees, some a gate fee. It was therefore only fair that these district groups should be self-governing with our extension department in an advisory capacity only. The department provided lecturers and



artists for talks and demonstrations, equipment for children's painting classes and instructors for adults, suggested films on art and in certain circumstances provided paintings for exhibition and analysis.

Our first group was started in a high-income district of good homes, modern apartment houses and some industries. Our next began in a lower-income district where there was a long established and flourishing painting club which, however, did not form part of the group, although its members often attended the meetings.

Each district proved to have its own individuality, its own interests and its own diverse facilities. Different tastes had to be catered to. This seemed right and proper to us, as art does not conform to a pattern. Yet at first it was difficult to persuade the group executives of this, as they thirsted for a cut-and-dried programme. We only insisted that a certain standard be set—to discard the second rate and insist on the good.

We found that the average person joining the groups, while interested in appreciating art, had usually only the most elementary knowledge of it. Most had a timid approach to so-called "modern art", a few were fascinated by it, others were very hostile. We tried to deal gently with everyone and provide a mixture of old and new.

In order to set up a group in a district, we had first to show what we could do. So after initial contacts had been made, and if these were favourable, a preliminary executive was set up. This executive organized and arranged publicity for an initial public meeting which the gallery gave to the community free of charge. The programme consisted of talks with slides, demonstrations of painting, films and sometimes a small exhibition of sketches or a painting or two lent by the gallery. At this meeting a permanent executive for the group was either elected or appointed.

Our first meeting of this nature was held in September, 1950. By February, 1952, we had five active groups, an almost too rapid expansion. In March of that year hopes that the work was really necessary were stimulated and our pride given a nice boost by being "invited" to supply our services. Up till then

we had been offering them. This request came from a long established and most successful amateur painting club, the Willowdale Group of Artists, whose members felt they needed something more than the usual painting evenings. They sponsored the meetings we arranged, which were open to the public. This, they found, was to their advantage because more people applied for membership in their club. In many ways this group has been one of the most satisfactory. The district is a new one, many of the householders being young married couples. There are some serious painters in this club who have had art-college training.

The success of each group varies from time to time. Attendance and therefore finances fluctuate disconcertingly. However, we have learned never to despair. From the verge of ruin one group has now recovered, has a substantial sum of money in reserve and is now ready to embark on an expanded programme.

Our extension groups encircle Toronto from the east to the west. They are active in Agincourt, East York, Leaside, Lawrence Park, Willowdale, Weston, Etobicoke and the Lakeshore at Mimico. Agincourt and Mimico are our newest additions and both requested our services. Attendances last year at extension activities numbered approximately three thousand. We have made a wide public feel they belong to the Gallery.

MARY STEWART BAGNANI

### *The Breaking Down of Isolation*

Why do we attempt to take art to the people? The Saskatchewan Arts Board has been charged with a number of responsibilities towards Saskatchewan which can be summed up briefly as concern for the quality of rural living. Art can add to the lives of people, in enjoyment as much as anything. And with rural people, experience of art has value in breaking down isolationism, in providing a sense of belonging to a greater world and a share in the amenities of living. The lack of art experience amongst laymen is a common pattern not confined to rural people. But in the countryside there is little or no opportunity for finding this experience.

Lack of sophistication in rural places has very definite advantages as well as disadvantages. The first great advantage is that an art exhibition, no matter how restricted in scope or badly presented, is *an occasion* in a small town or village. No matter if it be a women's group or a service club sponsoring the display, this is everyone's affair, from infants to grandparents. The interest is at a high level and is all pervasive. So that is a good start. Another reassuring thing to remember is that the exhibition has been wanted. But perhaps the motives are not good enough, for example, merely to provide an attractive setting for a certain meeting. Then again perhaps such motives are not so unworthy: the dinginess of a hall is felt to be unsupportable or there exists a feeling of responsibility to supply more satisfying interests for club members.

I have noticed that documented displays are not very helpful to people, they don't read documentation. People are essentially

interested in the painting itself, not the written remarks. Labels, such as the Museum of Modern Art provides, or scholarly catalogues such as that accompanying the Leonardo da Vinci exhibition supplied by Unesco are not read or understood. Every hamlet, like every big town, has its minority of educated and intelligent people, but at exhibitions one frequently meets uneducated *and* highly intelligent people. They ask sensible questions and make significant comments. However, one is taken aback from time to time by astonishingly innocent remarks such as, "This picture has taken a beating—the paint has been rubbed right off", in reference to a water colour with large areas of white. But such a remark at once provides an opening for discussion on kinds of painting, what certain words refer to, how an artist uses his tools. With such discussion comes more respect for the thought and skills which have gone into the making of a painting.

*Rural school children in Saskatchewan come by car and truck to see, for the first time, an exhibition of sculpture in a local community hall*



The most gratifying visitors are the children. They literally rub noses with the work, whatever it happens to be. Every detail is given minute attention. This response is sometimes marred by a well-intentioned teacher who arms them with pencil and notebook into which they must enter irrelevancies such as title, cost, artist. I believe this seriously interferes with enjoyment and dampens the first intense pleasure. My own method may be wrong. I ask them to select and remember just one painting which they can describe in such a way that their parents feel they too *must* see it. I suggest they seek comparisons, in ideas, content, method. When I talk about any work I do it by questioning with direct reference to it, my main object being to have them look and look. Children in villages are unspoiled, fresh, have time on their hands and their eagerness seems to indicate a starvation for imaginative, created things. The only serious competition to an art exhibition might be the circus.

I recently asked a small boy before a reproduction of a Gauguin of the Tahiti period if he had an idea what it was about. He looked hard at the fruits, the flowers, the indolent undressed people and then pronounced in a triumphant way, "Heaven!"

When groups arrange to hold exhibitions, it takes only a little persuasion to have them held longer so that students from rural schools of the area may visit them. They come in motor cars, farm trucks, buses, sleighs, and on foot when it is muddy. Parents from farms hearing

about it, come too and sometimes walk several miles. I remember a farmer's wife coming in carrying two small planks. These she had used one before the other, stepping-stone-fashion, to defeat the hazard of our notorious gumbo clay.

This gives some idea of the response. Their appreciation and lack of sophistication makes it possible for art experience to become easily integrated with living experience, like learning a second language when young. Works that are difficult for adults are fully acceptable to the younger children.

The grown-ups have more reservations, they are cautious, but they also have more confidence in the interpreter, I think, than urban dwellers. Films are very useful in extending art experience or showing the relationship of art to living. They often attract people who would not go to see "art".

As for presentation, it is obvious that gallery standards must go by the board. Each display raises a new set of problems. When I have had no choice I have had to take to a baseboard showing at floor level. I should, however, like to emphasize that these situations must be seized as opportunities. I pick up a painting and say, "This is how to look at a work of art—face to face and with respect. It was created for us as an adornment to living." Part of the business of exhibitions is hard manual work, part of it is teaching, not only in regard to the display but in helping people learn how to handle and cherish works of art.

NORAH McCULLOUGH

#### THOMAS DAVIES — SOLDIER AND PAINTER OF EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY CANADA

*Continued from page 276*

non-professional painter. Like all the soldier-painters, he was evidently an exact observer; and he set down not only the Canadian landscape as he saw it through the changing seasons, but something of the human life about him. Many of his pictures are enlivened by the habitant or Indian types and costumes which make incidental appearances. During his service in America Davies travelled over and recorded an extraordinarily wide area of the continent. He knew the Maritime region and the St. Lawrence valley well; he was equally familiar with New York and New Jersey;

he travelled in the Great Lakes basin (there are two apparently undated pictures of Niagara Falls, now in the United States, and one of Seneca Falls); his visit to the site of Ottawa is attested by an undated water colour, *The Great [Chaudière] Falls on the Outavaius River, Lower Canada*. What he saw on his journeyings he set down for posterity with care and skill. Our debt to this recorder of the Canada of two centuries ago is considerable. It is to be hoped that time will bring to light both more of his pictures and more facts about his career.

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## Coast to Coast in Art

JAMES S. H. WILLER

*San Marco Goes  
Up in Pigeons*

### ***Canadian Artists Abroad—an Exhibition Now on Tour of Canada***

The wheel has come full circle. Our artistic vision, once clouded by a stagnant academism, was partially cleared, back in the twenties, by a health-giving contact with the more sturdy aspects of Canadian landscape. But, in the fifties, there is no longer stagnation; there is, if anything, perhaps too much experiment. And from experiment has come as much doubt as hope.

For most artists of today the way out appears to be no longer through a return to nature, but rather through the impact of the wider world, both in thought and action. To many this impact comes through travel, through sudden or prolonged immersion in the full stream of contemporary art, wherever at the moment it may most

freely gush forth, in Italy or France or England or Mexico.

The truth of this is well exemplified in the exhibition "Canadian Artists Abroad", in which paintings by 17 Canadians, who have lived for a while in other countries, are shown. What they produced abroad or since their return is contrasted with what they did before they went on their travels. Men such as Pellán, Humphrey, Beny and Roberts are represented, as well as a few less well-known painters, for instance, William Roberts of Rexdale, Ontario, and James S. H. Willer of Winnipeg. The idea of presenting their work in this way came from Clare Bice of the Art Gallery and Museum of London, Ontario. The exhibition opened in London in March and is now being circulated by the National Gallery of Canada.



### ***Exhibition of Saskatchewan Art***

The Seventh Annual Exhibition of Saskatchewan Art consisted of 45 works including five pieces of sculpture and was selected from more than two hundred entries sent in by Saskatchewan artists. The jury members were Maxwell Bates of Calgary and Raymond Obermayr of Pocatello, Idaho. It opened in Regina in March and has since gone to Saskatoon and Rosthern for further showings.

The Saskatchewan Arts Board purchased from the exhibition the oil painting, *Grass in Winter*, by Arthur F. McKay of Regina, and a serigraph print, *Abstract*, by Trudy Fischer of Saskatoon for its circulating collection of Saskatchewan works of art.

### ***The Japanese Ambassador Presents Prizes to Child Artists in Saint John, N.B.***

Unfortunately, the Children's Art Centre in Saint John, New Brunswick, after a number of years of achievement has now had to close its doors because of organizational difficulties. Some of the children who had attended its classes, however, received international recognition this winter when the Japanese Ambassador to Canada, His Excellency, Dr. Koto Matsudaira, came to Saint John to present prizes to three of them, who had won top awards in the "My Mother" Competition, sponsored last year by Japan's Morinaga Society and Unesco. This contest

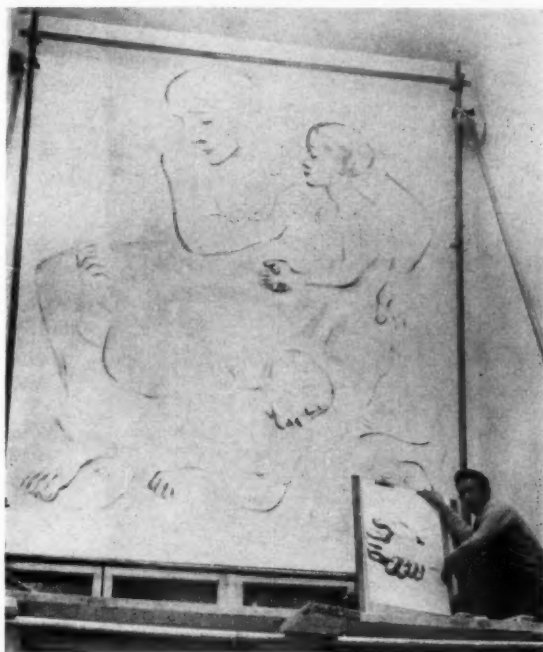
drew over seventy-five thousand entries from 43 countries. The award winners in Saint John were: Kathy McIntyre, 10 years, whose painting was reproduced in the 1956 winter issue of *Canadian Art*; Betty Ann Ward, 5 years, and Susan McHugh, 15 years.

### ***A Pavilion for Canadian Art in Venice***

Over sixty years ago participation in the world's first permanent international art exhibition, the Biennale of Venice, was opened to the nations of the world. Some twenty countries by now have erected pavilions there; some of these in fact date back to the turn of the century. At long last, Canada, too, is to be represented with its own building in this park beside the Adriatic lagoons. The Parliament of Canada is being asked to vote this year a small but adequate sum of money to provide for a one-room pavilion, to be administered by the National Gallery of Canada. This should be ready in time for the XXIX Biennale (1958).

However, through the kindness of the Italian authorities, Canada since 1952 has already been participating, in a relatively small way, in the Biennale. The National Gallery has been using one room, with limited hanging space, in the Italian building. These same facilities will be available again this year, from June to October, for the XXVIII Biennale (1956), when paintings by J. L. Shadbolt of Vancouver, autographic prints by

Jack Nichols here compares a sketch with the finished mural he has just completed for the new Salvation Army headquarters in Toronto. His mural is in the form of a great brush drawing of a mother and children. In the same building, R. York Wilson has done a larger mural on the subject of the 23rd Psalm





Harold Town of Toronto and sculpture by Louis Archambault of Montreal will make up the Canadian selection. In 1954 Canada showed paintings by Borduas, Binning and Riopelle; in 1952, works by Emily Carr, Alfred Pellán, David Milne and Goodridge Roberts.

#### ***Eskimo Carvers Create the Mace of the Council of the Northwest Territories***

Canadian Eskimos, whose carvings in stone hold a distinguished place in the collections of the western world, have shown they can be craftsmen in a wider sphere; a group of them have recently successfully undertaken the making of the Mace of the Council of the Northwest Territories.

The Mace, similar to the traditional emblems carried in the parliaments of Canada and the United Kingdom, but embodying elements representing the history and life of the north, was commissioned on the suggestion of the Right Honourable Vincent Massey, Governor General of Canada, and presented by him to the Council.

The Eskimos of Cape Dorset, a small community on southeastern Baffin Island were the craftsmen. Pitsulak was foreman and Oshawetuk, chief carver. With them worked six others who took on such tasks as hammering copper, filing and polishing. Technical direction was given by James A. Houston, well-known artist of the north, who is on the staff of the Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources. Together the group completed the project in just 21 days.

The Eskimos at first took a light-hearted approach to their work, terming the Mace *ping-wartok* or "the plaything". Later they came to understand the import of the unusual object they were being asked to make, and the work was carried on with fervour from seven in the morning until eleven o'clock at night. They then came to call the Mace respectfully, *anoutoaloak* or "the great club", an appropriate name for an article of parliamentary ceremonial which in its earliest form had been used as a weapon to protect the persons of French and English kings.

The most troublesome detail of the Mace's construction was the crown. Native copper is found in pure, free form in the central Arctic. An 80-pound block was brought to Cape Dorset and pounded into sheets with rocks and a small sledge-hammer. The sheets were cut and ham-

*The Eskimo artists who made the Mace of the Council of the Northwest Territories and, opposite page, the Mace itself*

mered into shape on rocks which were adapted as dies. When the crown was completed, one of its projections broke off, but Pitsulak and his workmen had used all the copper. The crisis was resolved by the donation of a prized possession of one of the Eskimo women, a large copper kettle brought in 1921 by the reindeer herders from Lapland.

The orb, which surmounts the crown, is made from whalebone, left on the shores of Baffin Island by Scottish whaling crews a hundred years ago. Below the crown and orb of the 35-pound Mace, which is 5½ feet high, is a circle of bow-head whales. These, considered to be symbols of royalty and greatness, are carved in relief upon whalebone. Curving out from below this circlet are four musk-ox horns.

Midway on the head is a circular carving of whalebone in which the people and animals of the Arctic are depicted. Here are carved expressively the musk-ox, the polar bear, the wolf, the white whale, the caribou, the walrus, the Eskimo hunter, and the Eskimo mother and child.

Beneath this carving a band of porcupine quillwork, made by an Indian woman of the Yellowknife district adds colour and variety. The base of the head is a bowl-shaped section of whalebone bearing carved representations of white Arctic fox pelts, which are the staple of the Eskimo economy.

The tusk of a narwhal forms the shaft of the Mace. The narwhal's tusk is in reality an overgrown tooth, nearly six feet long. At first glance it looks like a twisted horn and gave substance to the legend of the unicorn when first observed by early Arctic navigators. The unicorn has figured extensively in Anglo-Saxon heraldry but it was from the narwhal that the tales of unicorns were originally derived. In a sense, therefore, the Mace of the Northwest Territories bears a heraldic symbol older than the arms of Canada.

The foot of the Mace is topped by a carved piece of oak from the wreck of H.M.S. *Fury*, Sir William Parry's ship that grounded on Somerset Island in 1825. This relic was found by Supt. Henry Larsen, during his successful voyage through the North West Passage in the R.C.M.P. vessel *St. Roch* in 1940-1942. The carving on the oak portrays the entry of explorers and Europeans into the Arctic.

Beneath the oak are another band of Eskimo quillwork and the final section of whalebone into which are carved the seals. Seals are the most important sea-mammals to the Eskimos, providing them with meat, skins for clothing and boots, and oil for heating and cooking.



### Non-objective Artists Form New Society

At a moment when art societies are growing more and more "universal", admitting into their ranks painters of all tendencies, a number of Montreal artists have just founded a society restricted to "non-figurative" art. Its title is *L'Association des artistes non-figuratifs de Montreal*. Primarily a fusion of groups already existing for a number of years, such as the "Surréalistes", the "Automatistes" and "Plasticiens", it also includes a number of artists who, while working in similar veins, never previously identified themselves with a group. The association, usually referred to by its initials, AANFM, is for the moment composed of 32 members, all painters except for one sculptor, one silversmith and one photographer.

Its president, Fernand Leduc, has stated that the founding of an Arts Council of the City of Montreal convinced the different groups of abstract artists there of the need to unite their efforts. One immediate result was that the Parks and Playgrounds Service of the City of Montreal asked AANFM to organize a large exhibition in a public hall adjoining a municipally owned restaurant on St. Helen's Island, a short distance from the centre of the city. This was opened on February 27.

The association includes, at present, only artists actually in Montreal, but it is intended to enlarge the group so as to show recent work of Canadian abstract artists now living overseas or elsewhere in Canada. Among the present members are Marcel Barbeau, Léon Bellefleur, Robert Blair,

Pierre Bourassa, Georges Delrue, Pierre Garneau, Pierre Gauvreau, André Jasmin, Patrick Landsley, Guido Molinari, Jean-Paul Mousseau, Gerard Tremblay and Gordon Webber. The secretary of AANFM is Jauran and Montreal's first gallery devoted solely to abstract art, L'Actuelle, is used as its headquarters.

### The Death of the Founder of Canadian Art

The founder and first editor of *Canadian Art*, Walter Abell, died at his home in East Lansing, Michigan, on February 28. He had been ill since a heart attack in January. Surviving are his wife, Marcelle, and a son and daughter. At the time of his death, he was Associate Professor of Art History at Michigan State College.

A native of Philadelphia, where he was born in 1897, Professor Abell came to Canada in 1937 to teach fine arts at Acacia University, Wolfville, Nova Scotia. While there, he helped organize the Maritime Art Association and, with the aid of a grant from the Carnegie Corporation, started the magazine *Maritime Art*. This, in 1943, he was able to expand, with the assistance of the National Gallery of Canada, into the national magazine, *Canadian Art*. In 1944 he went from Ottawa to Michigan. His first book, *Representation and Form*, appeared in 1936, and this year the Harvard University Press expects to publish a second book by him, *The Collective Dream in Art*, a work on which he had devoted so much time and research in recent years.

## NEW BOOKS ON THE ARTS

**MONUMENTS OF ROMANESQUE ART.** By H. Swarzenski. 104 pp. + 230 pl. (566 ill.). University of Chicago Press. (Canadian distributors: University of Toronto Press). \$25.00.

This is an excellent, in some ways an invaluable, book but it is difficult to be sure whom it is meant for. To the mediaevalist it is the answer to a prayer, for its illustrations, of which there are more than five hundred, are good photographs excellently reproduced and they cover the period from the early ninth to the beginning of the thirteenth century. One would, however, have supposed that if the mediaevalist were the target, author and publisher would alike have insisted on a text of suitable length for this number of illustrations. Evidently neither of them did so; the introductory text covers a bare 24 pages; there is also a brief technical description and references for each illustration, as well as six very thorough indexes. One is led to wonder whether the book is meant for the so-called "general reader",

and the idea is strengthened by the first paragraph of the introduction, referring with implied regret to the fact that mediaeval art has not entered into the aesthetic experience of the twentieth century but is buried in large and heavy tomes. This book, which measures 12½ by 10 inches and weighs 5 pounds, apparently is intended to set things right. This seems a quite chimerical idea. We may regret it, but it is hard to see the Utrecht Psalter or the Shrine of St. Hadelin really entering the aesthetic experience of 1956 on any terms.

A true idea of the book's real contents is given by the sub-title "The Art of Church Treasures in North-Western Europe". It wisely restricts itself to the formative area of all the mediaeval styles; the plates are of manuscript illustrations and of objects in gold and silver, bronze, enamel and ivory. This is a noteworthy production which everyone interested in the mediaeval "minor arts" will want to refer to. Its publication is an important event. We need only

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regret that its price is bound to put it out of the reach of many who might otherwise have enjoyed it.

GERARD BRETT

ENCYCLOPEDIA OF PAINTING. *Edited by Bernard S. Myers. 511 pp.; numerous illustrations (216 in colour). New York: Crown Publishers Inc. \$10.00.*

This is a book with some pretensions to comprehensiveness. It has about three thousand entries, covering the art of the world from the earliest times to the present day. However, instead of wisely limiting themselves to fairly adequate black and white reproductions, the publishers have given us also some hundreds of reproductions in colour, all of them poorly printed, and highly misleading. So the book makes a sad display of itself. Yet, a glance at the many thumb-nail biographies of both historical and contemporary artists would seem to indicate that most of the information is reasonably sound and succinct, especially for the European, United States and Mexican schools. But what of Canada?

Probably, I thought, both Cornelius Krieghoff and James Wilson Morrice would at least be included. But no, I found no mention of them, nor any of Tom Thomson and the members of the Group of Seven. Nothing either for Alfred Pellam, the first Canadian to be honoured by a one-man exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art in Paris, or for Borduas and Riopelle whose works are now in the Museum of Modern Art in New York. But there was a listing

for Emily Carr: "... only mildly affected by the primitive quality of her themes, her painting remains figurative throughout". I can now finally report, after having finished an exhausting page by page survey of the book that Dr. B. S. Myers, the editor, has listed a rather disparate collection of six Canadian artists (he calls Horatio Walker an American). Here are his six: Emily Carr, Eric Goldberg, Henri Masson, Robert Cauchon, Caven Atkins, Jean-Charles Faucher.

And who is Cauchon? Well, he is an almost unknown primitive painter from near Murray Bay, who happened once to have a painting shown in a Canadian exhibition organized by the Addison Gallery of American Art in Andover, Massachusetts, in 1942. As for Faucher, he can hardly be termed the most widely recognized among the living artists of Quebec. Yet the above, for what it is worth, stands as the studied selective judgment of Dr. Myers of City College, New York. How provincial then can a New Yorker become in reference to Canada, or is it we who are the provincials?

D.W.B.

GRAPHIS ANNUAL 1955-56. 207 pp.; 755 ill. (66 in colour). Zurich: Amstutz & Herdeg. \$12.50.

In April, 1955, an exhibition was held in Paris entitled "Art and Advertising in the World". The exhibits, chosen as the best of present day graphic art by artist-members of the Alliance Graphique Internationale make up the present volume of *Graphis Annual 1955-56*. Over ten thousand works were con-



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More than one third of the examples are American, with British, Swiss, French and Italian making up the bulk of the remainder. The Canadian selections include a number of title cards for CBC television programmes by Gert Pollmer of Toronto. Japanese resurgence as a nation seems to apply equally in the world of graphic art, as they are represented here by a fine group of posters.

This present volume adds much to the dignity of advertising art as a profession and shows that the gap between advertising and fine art, once considered so impassable, now no longer exists. EDWIN BAKER

**SEPTEMBER GALE.** By John A. B. McLeish. 212 pp.; 24 plates + 4 in colour. Toronto: J. M. Dent & Sons. \$3.95.

Dr. McLeish's *September Gale* warrants a place on the far too small shelf of books on Canadian artists for, in this work on Arthur Lismer, he has had the patience to sort out, from a mass of material, a personal history of unusual diversity and range. If fault is found with the pedestrian quality of the writing, this should act as a challenge to the next biographer to do something more attuned to the vigour of the painting, *September Gale*, itself.

From this account of an intensely productive life, Lismer emerges too tamely. There is a strong strain of the evangelical in Lismer, but his preaching has always been relieved by breadth of outlook and irrepressible humour. He is capable of ridiculous acts and quips, not solely for the benefit of children. For instance, on departing after an exacting day's work, Lismer would dissolve everyone's tension by

giving his hat an adroit kick in the air and catching it on his head.

A book of this kind should provide accurate information. But Dr. McLeish is not always precise. Here are a few instances: the patron and friend of Tom Thomson and the Group of Seven, Dr. McCallum, who was an eye specialist, is referred to improperly as an optometrist. The artist, FitzGerald, is mentioned as having died. Lionel LeMoine FitzGerald of Winnipeg is alive, well and active. More power to him!

While there is a very long account of Lismer's career as an educationist, nevertheless, some aspects of this deserve more attention, beyond the minutiae of daily existence. Lismer's impact on the art consciousness of Canada has still to be properly evaluated. For example, he was heavily engaged, mostly gratis, between 1928 and 1936, with extra-mural activities at the University of Toronto. This involved the promotion of exhibitions in the college residences, and lecture and drawing courses for students of various faculties.

Despite the difficulties at the Ontario College of Art, which the biographer dwells on, there were also strong bonds, both of a friendly and professional nature, between Lismer and the men and women associated with him. I feel sorry that this fellowship

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has not been fully acknowledged. There is reference to troublesome students. Yet there were also a host of others who remain grateful to Arthur Lismer as I do, because of his concern for the confused post-adolescent, and for the wise advice he gave about study and job opportunities. Such influences matter far more than the bitter record of tilts with authority. It was to be expected that Lismer's furious drive would disturb the established and complacent.

Some people have tagged Lismer's ideas on child art as "old hat". Where art programmes have become academic, the Lismer philosophy has been lost sight of. Dr. McLeish clearly shows this philosophy to be the antithesis of academic training. It is inherently creative because it is dependent on the free development of the individual child. Most of the good art programmes in Canadian and South African schools are now based on Lismer's teaching. Sometimes the source has become obscured by current educational jargon. His ideas on art teaching are fundamentally simple, derived from long experience and conviction.

Dr. McLeish pays tribute to Lismer's remarkable sensitivity to environment, an insight which he exploited in valuable ways in Africa. It is worth noting that some twenty years ago, he deplored the refusal of the white South African to acknowledge the rich gifts offered by native African cultures, just as Laurens Van der Post does today in his profound new book, *The Dark Eye of Africa*.

There must be now nearly two generations of young people who have worked under Lismer's direction. Where are they and what are they doing? Almost every aspect of Canadian life has, in some manner, been affected by him, through film makers, teachers, artists, librarians, magazine editors, writers, housewives and the people who buy paintings.

NORAH McCULLOUGH

CATALOGUE OF COLOUR REPRODUCTIONS  
OF PAINTINGS 1860 TO 1955. 294 pp. + 279 ill.  
Paris: UNESCO. (Canadian distributors: The University of Toronto Press). \$3.50.

The third edition of this useful catalogue is now available. It lists 641 colour reproductions. What makes it important is that, while there are hundreds of other reproductions for the period available and on the market, those mentioned here are the only ones which possess any reasonable relation to the originals as regards accuracy of colour and detail. They were passed by a selection committee of eminent experts including Sir Philip Hendy, director of the National Gallery, London, and Charles Sterling of the Louvre in Paris. M. Sterling, in a report issued by the committee, describes as follows how many thoroughly bad reproductions had to be eliminated before the present selection was made:

"By comparing several reproductions—published by different firms—of the same famous painting, the committee found that the same carpet or wall was sometimes shown as green, sometimes as blue and sometimes as mauve.

"The distortion of a colour in a painting is no mere error in detail; it affects the general harmony of the work and deforms it completely. Too many reproductions are still being published in which all the tones are dissembled . . . or else falsified . . .

"To allow such prints of masterpieces to be distributed throughout the world is artistic sacrilege."

D.W.B.

## THE ART FORUM

Dear Sir:

I felt very badly when the Children's Art Centre here was discontinued because I believe it did so much for so many children—rich and poor with varying degrees of appreciation and art ability—in the enrichment of their lives, the joy of discovery, the lack of fear in experimenting, the encouragement of initiative and thinking. . . . Who in Canada is there who is guiding art teachers along this line except Lismar? I am somewhat concerned that this type of art is being shoved to the side. In Charlottetown, P.E.I., too, it has been discontinued and Frances Johnstone, who slaved over there for very little, is now with the Children's Art Gallery in Louisville, Kentucky. . . . I wonder what can be done by you and any of us to foster this movement?

JULIA CRAWFORD,  
Saint John, N.B.

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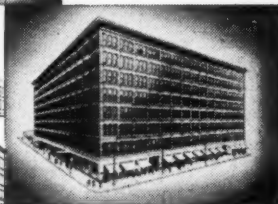
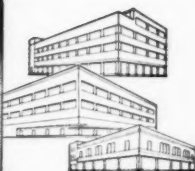
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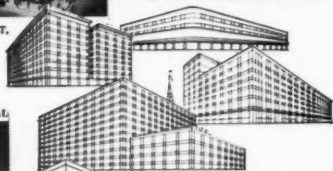
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